

Message Text

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ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 ISO-00 INR-10 EUR-12 SS-15 OIC-02
CIAE-00 EB-08 ICA-20 DODE-00 IO-14 NSC-05 NSF-02
ARA-14 NSAE-00 COME-00 L-03 DLOS-09 SOE-02 DOE-15
TRSE-00 PM-05 EPA-04 INT-05 PA-02 CEQ-01 DOTE-00
OMB-01 ACDA-12 SP-02 /185 W
-----127946 081158Z /53

R 080654Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2755
INFO USNAVY WASHDC
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

UNCLAS SEOUL 6960

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OCLR, OSCI, OTRA, NZ, KS, US
SUBJECT: PROPOSED KOREAN ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

1. KIM YONG-DO, LEADER OF THE SUCCESSFUL 1977 KOREAN EVEREST EXPEDITION, HAS APPROACHED THE NEW ZEALAND EMBASSY HERE FOR PERMISSION TO LEAD A PARTY OF TWELVE KOREANS, LATE IN 1978, ON A TREK ACROSS NZ ANTARCTIC TERRITORY TO THE SOUTH POLE AND BACK. KIM, A NATIONAL ASSEMBLYMAN OF THE GOVERNING DRP PARTY, CLAIMS THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE CHUNGANG ILBO NEWSPAPER, WHICH HAS PURPORTEDLY PUT UP \$600,000, AND OF THE DRP.

2. NEW ZEALANDERS ADVISED KIM AS FOLLOWS:

(A) HE SHOULD HAVE ROK MOFA ENDORSEMENT BEFORE APPLYING FORMALLY TO NZG FOR APPROVAL.

(B) NZG POLICY ON ANTARCTIC EXPEDITIONS FAVORS SCIENTIFIC MERIT AS OPPOSED TO ADVENTURISM, SO KIM SHOULD INCLUDE SOME SORT OF RESEARCH PROJECT IN HIS PLANNING IF HE HOPES TO OBTAIN THE APPROVAL HE SEEKS.

(C) LOGISTICAL COORDINATION BETWEEN USG AND NZG IN
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ANTARCTIC AFFAIRS IS SO CLOSE THAT U.S. APPROVAL WILL BE NEEDED AS WELL.

(D) ALL TRAVEL AND SUPPORT FACILITIES ARE FULLY COMMITTED FOR THE NEXT TWO ANTARCTIC SUMMERS, HENCE HE SHOULD NOT COUNT ON GOING SOUTH BEFORE AT LEAST 1980.

3. AT THE SUGGESTION OF NZ EMBOFFS, KIM AND SEVERAL COLLEAGUES

RECENTLY SPENT SOME TIME IN WELLINGTON CONSULTING WITH ANTARCTIC EXPERTS THERE. ON THE BASIS OF ADVISE RECEIVED, KIM NOW INTENDS TO TAKE THE "HILLARY ROUTE", WHICH NZ EMBOFF BELIEVES RUNS ACROSS U.S.-CLAIMED TERRITORY.

4. ALTHOUGH KIM HAS RECENTLY SPOKEN OF HIS GROUP'S CHARTERING A DANISH FREIGHTER TO GET THEM TO MCMURDO SOUND IN 1979, NZ EMBOFF'S IMPRESSION IS THAT KIM REALIZES THAT HE WILL BE DEPENDENT ON U.S. AND NZ AUTHORITIES FOR BOTH PERMISSION TO ENTER THE REGION AND ASSISTANCE IN DOING SO.

5. KIM'S PURPOSE IS CLEARLY TO GAIN PUBLICITY, WHICH, HE MAINTAINS, HURTS NO ONE AND CAN BE OF GREAT POSITIVE VALUE IN BOOSTING KOREANS' SELF-IMAGE AND WILLINGNESS TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. HOWEVER, HE SHOULD HAVE LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN DEVELOPING A SCIENTIFIC PURPOSE FOR THE VENTURE. KIM'S SUCCESS WITH THE EVEREST EXPEDITION HAS MADE HIM SOMETHING OF A NATIONAL FIGURE AND IF HE HAS THE BACKING OF CHUNGANG ILBO, WHICH IS OWNED BY MULTI-MILLIONAIRE YI PYONG-CHOL, FINANCING SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM.

6. ASSUMING THAT WE WILL RECEIVE AN APPROACH IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE ON THE RESPONSE WE SHOULD MAKE. WE WOULD LIKE TO ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, BUT IF THERE ARE SERIOUS OBSTACLES TO KIM'S UNCLASSIFIED

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PLAN, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ADVISE HIM EARLY RATHER THAN LATE. GLEYSTEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SEOUL06960
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780324-0252
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780887/aaaacuws.tel
Line Count: 96
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 581b0467-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1803588
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROPOSED KOREAN ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION
TAGS: OCLR, OSCi, OTRA, NZ, KS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/581b0467-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014